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St. Paul District

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Public Affairs

Corps Facts

Grand Forks, N.D./East Grand Forks, Minn. Flood Reduction Project

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Project Background

In 1997, a catastrophic flood occurred in the communities of East Grand Forks, Minn., and Grand Forks, N.D. This caused extraordinary property damage, disruption of community infrastructure and public services and an evacuation and dislocation of citizens that was of historic proportions. The flooding and the mass evacuation that resulted from it demonstrated there was a need for protection from the inundation of large magnitude floods. The objective of the implementation of flood reduction for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks is to provide protection from a flood of magnitude equal to that of the 1997 flood.

Grand Forks and East Grand Forks are located at the intersection of the Red River of the North and the Red Lake River in Grand Forks and Polk counties, respectively. They are approximately 90 miles south of the Canadian border and have a combined population of nearly 60,000. Since flood inundation during the spring of 1997, both communities have been working aggressively with the St. Paul District to develop a permanent, comprehensive flood damage reduction project incorporating recreation and aesthetic features.

Project Description

The flood reduction project consists of building levees and floodwall, essentially creating three rings around both cities, to protect the communities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. Additionally, it includes stabilizing an existing dam, removing a railroad bridge, closures for numerous roads, extending and expanding an existing diversion channel and constructing a new diversion channel. The design level of protection is equivalent to the peak discharge experienced during the 1997 flood in these cities.

The Corps completed a General Reevaluation Report and Environmental Impact Statement in 1999. Construction began during the summer of 2000. Since then, the first two phases of levee construction in both Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, the English Coulee Diversion on the Grand Forks side and the Heartsville Coulee Diversion on the East Grand Forks side are all essentially complete. The Phase III and IV levees for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks are nearing completion. The Corps expects the majority of the project to a 100-year level of protection to be completed in 2006, subject to the availability of funding. The East Grand Forks area south of the Red Lake River will be completed in 2007 due to additional bank stabilization requirements.

The current working estimate for the flood damage reduction project stands at \$410 million. Project design and construction costs are being shared between federal and the two cities at 50 percent each. Operation and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the two cities.

Authority

The project was authorized in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1999 (Public Law 105-277).